

terrible terrorist attacks, America has been shoulder-to-shoulder in a struggle to meet the challenges of a world that is a little less safe, a little scarier, and far less predictable. The efforts of organizations like the Liberty Rotary Club signify the commitment and concern of Americans everywhere. Our nation's strength does not lie in her military might but rather in the collective compassion of its people.

Since the September 11th terrorist attacks, the Liberty Rotary Club has joined more than 8,000 Missouri Rotarians in their statewide effort to raise \$100,000 to provide for the grieving families and rescue workers. The patriotism and persistence of the Liberty Rotary Club is a lasting memorial to the thousands of victims who perished in New York, Washington, and Pennsylvania.

Through the days, weeks, and months ahead, all Americans must come together and do what they can to assist the nation's war effort. Whether it is giving blood, sending donations, praying for the thousands of grieving families, or simply saying thanks to the brave men and women who put their lives on the line each and every day so that we may be free, it is important that the American people are vigilant in their efforts to overcome this evil. Though our nation has witnessed unspeakable horror, America's virtues, determination, and faith continues to shine brightly on the world.

I am confident that the United States will seek out those that harbor hatred, terror, and depravity in their hearts; and we will defeat them. This is a war that we must, can, and will win. May God bless the families and children grieving across this great nation and may God bless America.

#### A MORMON MOMENT

**HON. JAMES V. HANSEN**

OF UTAH

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 2, 2001*

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Speaker, the national news publication, *Newsweek*, has published an article entitled "A Mormon Moment," authored by Mr. Kenneth L. Woodward, (9/10/01) which highlights the growing influence of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, sometimes referred to as the LDS Church, or "Mormon Church" in world religion, and in particular, its influence in my home State of Utah. As home to the upcoming 2002 Winter Olympic Games, Salt Lake City, also serves as the world headquarters for the church.

Woodward's article made the case that the church, its history, its doctrine and influence on political and civic affairs will be under the world's media spotlight during the 2002 Winter Games in February. I think that is a safe assumption.

Religious belief is a deeply personal subject. Religious faith, or the lack thereof, defines largely who we are as a person. It is one of the most profound influences on our individual thoughts and actions. It is inherently difficult for a person of one faith to objectively and completely explain the doctrines and beliefs of another faith. I believe that, as a non-LDS reporter, Mr. Woodward's characterizations of LDS doctrines and teachings may have encountered some of this same difficulty.

As a fourth and fifth generation member of the LDS church, I must admit that I found

some of Mr. Woodward's characterizations of my beliefs and the history of the church to be strained or not entirely accurate in some instances, and perpetuates some unfortunate and outdated stereotypes.

However, it is not really appropriate or productive to engage in debate or detailed discussions on religious doctrines and beliefs on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives, and that is not my purpose in bringing this subject up tonight. Again, religious belief is deeply felt and personal, and each person should be left to discover and follow his or her own faith.

My purpose in coming to the floor on this subject tonight is seek to dispel the notion inherent in this article that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, or LDS Church, is actively seeking to exploit the 2002 Winter Games. I also want to dispel the notion that the Salt Lake Organizing Committee for the 2002 Winter Games is somehow beholden to or acting improperly in concert with the LDS Church.

I think that a few points must be made in counterbalance to Mr. Woodward's article that will help place all of this in perspective.

First, I respectfully disagree with the author's assertion that "[n]ot since the ancient Olympics were held under the gaze of Zeus and his randy band of gods and goddesses have the Games been staged in a local so thoroughly saturated by a single religion."

Approximately 72% of Utahans statewide claim membership to the LDS church. Even though 72% is still a substantial majority, the author failed to point out that within Salt Lake City itself, the figures are roughly 50% LDS members to 50% non-members. He also failed to point out that while many of Utah's prominent government leaders are LDS (which should not be a surprise when reflecting the composition of the general population), he failed to note that the last two mayors of Utah's largest city and capitol, Salt Lake City, including the current mayor, are not Members of the LDS church.

For balance, I think it's important to recognize that religious influences often permeate local cultures wherever one chooses to look. Olympic events have been held in several other venues where there have been even greater religious majorities than Salt Lake City.

For example, I recall the Winter Olympic Games being held in Grenoble, France, in the late 1960's. France's population is over 90% Roman Catholic, and that particular faith and the history of the French people and culture are inseparable. The French have historically viewed their national identity as being intertwined with Catholicism. It is part of "who they are."

Another example is the Winter Olympic Games which were held in Lillehammer, Norway. I recently visited Norway. It is an extraordinarily beautiful country. Approximately 86% of the population are Lutheran. In addition, Lutheranism is the State Church. One could say the same thing about the influence of protestantism on Norwegian culture and politics as that which Catholicism had on France.

Yet another example is the most recent winter games held in Nagano, Japan. 98% of Japanese are followers of the ancient Shinto and Buddhist religions.

I'm sure that if we looked further, we could find other similar examples. Therefore, it should not strike the world, nor the media, as

unusual that religion plays an important part in the culture and history of Salt Lake City and its people. To the extent that this fact is newsworthy is the result of decisions made by the media themselves, and is not part of any organized effort on the part of the church or the Salt Lake Organizing Committee. I sincerely hope that the motivation for some of the media coverage of the LDS Church and its doctrines in the context of the 2002 Olympics is not motivated by some religious bias or prejudice based on specific beliefs.

For example, wouldn't it strike most people odd to have *Newsweek* write articles discussing specific Catholic or Lutheran, or Shinto religious beliefs in detail in the context of an Olympic story in France, Norway or Japan? To some extent, the attention focused on specific LDS religious beliefs in the context of the 2002 Winter Games seems out of place.

Second, I think the author did not adequately express the separateness of the 2002 Winter Games and the Salt Lake Organizing Committee from the LDS Church. They are entirely separate. One is a religious organization and world religion. The other is a secular organization. While there are LDS members who serve on the SLOC Executive Committee, a substantial majority of SLOC officials and employees are not members of the LDS Church.

It has been my experience that both organizations have sought, very diligently, to ensure that there is no undue influence, or even the appearance of undue influence, by the Church on the organization or outcome of the games. Any assertion that there has been undue influence is totally unsubstantiated.

Further, I would like to point out that these are America's Games. They're the world's games. They're not Utah's Games, nor the LDS Church's games. Like any other American city or state, we're proud to host, for a short time, the premier winter sports events in the world.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would hope that people would recognize that the reason that Salt Lake City was chosen to host the 2002 Winter Games is because of its reputation as having the "Greatest Snow on Earth." It has world-class skiing opportunities and venues.

We are all working together to ensure that all visitors feel welcome in Utah and in the United States. If you come to the games, you will have a good time. The focus will be on the athletic competition, as it should be.

We welcome the world to our state. We have nothing to hide and nothing to be embarrassed about. We also have nothing to apologize for. Utah's citizens of whatever religious background share in their pride and enthusiasm for upholding the Olympic Spirit. There is, and will be, a place at the table for everyone.

IN HONOR OF BALTIMORE COUNTY  
PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS  
ASSOCIATION—LOCAL 1311

**HON. ROBERT L. EHRLICH, JR.**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 2, 2001*

Mr. EHRLICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my gratitude and admiration for the men and women of the Baltimore County Professional Fire Fighters Association, Local 1311